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THE OKLAHOMAN

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CARLSON: Texas' toughness could add to edge over OU in Red River Rivalry. **1B**

ELECTION 2026 OKLAHOMA COUNTY JAIL SALES TAX MEASURE

DETENTION DILEMMA TO GO BEFORE VOTERS



District Attorney Vicki Behenna, Perrin Duncan with the nonprofit Arnall Family Foundation, and Oklahoma Secretary of Public Safety Tricia Everest argue for a county public safety sales tax at a forum presented by the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber at the Petroleum Club on Oct. 7. SARAH PHIPPS/THE OKLAHOMAN

Officials urge residents to support criminal justice campus

Richard Mize
The Oklahoman
USA TODAY NETWORK

Oklahoma County voters will decide whether to keep the old jail downtown or finance a national “showcase” criminal justice campus, at 1901 E Grand in the county sales tax election on Nov. 3.

Tricia Everest, state secretary of public safety, used “showcase” at a forum presented by the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber on Wednesday, Oct. 7, at the Petroleum Club downtown.

But she and other panelists agreed on the need for a new county jail and the tragedies that they and others say will keep unfolding at the 35-year-old jail at 201N Shartel Ave. if the vote fails.

If the tax passes, Everest said, “We

“We need a campus that is self-contained, functional ... no plumbing problems, no sewage problems, that doesn’t have elevators that don’t work, (and inmates) that don’t feel like they’re caged animals.”

District Attorney Vicki Behenna

will be the leader” in criminal justice reform. If it fails, the jail will become a “true disaster,” she said.

A tax of four-tenths of 1 cent would

be collected for 25 years. The tax would add 40 cents to a \$100 grocery bill.

If it fails, nothing changes, and “with every death, you’re paying for the lawsuit that follows,” District Attorney Vicki Behenna said, noting the county has paid about \$4 million for deaths and civil rights violations this year.

By almost all accounts, the present jail, a 13-story tower, cannot be modified to function correctly.

Everest, Behenna, and Perrin Duncan, program officer for the nonprofit Arnall Family Foundation, stated their case for a positive vote at the chamber forum.

Everest, Behenna and Duncan argued for more than building a new complete jail to accompany the related

See JAIL TAX, Page 5A

Lawmakers set to weigh changes to sex offender registry laws

Critics: One-sized-fits-all restrictions harm safety

Jessie Christopher Smith
The Oklahoman
USA TODAY NETWORK

An Oklahoma legislative committee is rethinking the state’s Sex Offender Registry after hearing from experts and advocates about how indiscriminate restrictions in state law are negatively impacting victims in unforeseen ways.

Oklahoma senators heard testimony and expertise from victims and advocates Tuesday, Sept. 6, on why state laws about the registry should be updated. Statements from convicted offenders and assault victims alike said unintended consequences from the Sex Offender Registration Act continue to adversely affect them.

Lawmakers from both major political parties led the interim study Tuesday. Senate Majority Floor Leader Julie Daniels, R-Bartlesville, said she called for a hearing to review the issue after a constituent told her that proposed registry law updates meant she couldn’t visit her grandchildren for 10 years.

Daniels also said she was surprised to find out that the system already in place did not allow for any pardons.

“That’s when I stopped and really

See SEX OFFENDER, Page 3A

THE GREEN RUSH

Regulators seek central database to help monitor state marijuana grow compliance

Ben Fenwick
For The Oklahoman

Leaders of Oklahoma’s drug enforcement agency say they need a statewide database to track compliance and enforcement of marijuana grow sites.

Donnie Anderson, director of the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Control, told legislators at a Capitol hearing that tracking compliance and enforcement through a shared database would improve coordination and management of issues tied to cleanup of the marijuana industry that voters legalized in 2018.

The hearing, an interim study organized by State Sen. Darcy Jech, R-Kingfisher, examined the problem with abandoned or illegal marijuana

See GREEN RUSH, Page 2A

Munson makes solo pitch for governor at OKC forum declined by competitors

Alex Gladden
The Oklahoman
USA TODAY NETWORK

Although congregants at St. John Missionary Baptist Church invited all five gubernatorial candidates to their Oklahoma City forum, only one showed up.

For an hour and a half, Cyndi Munson answered questions from a moderator and from audience members gathered at the historically Black church. Munson explained how she, as the Democratic nominee for governor, would shake up state government if elected. “All candidates were invited,”



Democratic nominee for governor Cyndi Munson answers questions at an Oct. 6 forum at St. John Missionary Baptist Church in Oklahoma City.

DOUG HOKE/THE OKLAHOMAN

said Mae Burge, who helped organize the event. “Remember that. Remember who showed up, and remember who showed out.”

Munson is facing Republican Mike Mazzei and three independents in the Nov. 3 general election.

About 50 people attended the Monday, Oct. 6, forum at St. John, a predominantly Black church that has served its members for more than a century.

Numerous questions from the audience asked Munson how she would represent Black Oklahomans and northeast Oklahoma City if elected as

See MUNSON, Page 5A

